M. QUESTION ABOUT ELIJAH. MARK 9:9-13

Jewish folklore included the notion that before the Messiah appeared Elijah would come again. It reminds us of the British legend that King Arthur will re-appear at a time of national crisis. Jesus says after the decisive revelation of his power at the Transfiguration that Elijah *has* come, and that it was John the Baptist. The Jews expected the return of the prophet to prepare for the coming of God or of the Messiah (*Malachi* 4:5f). Just as "Elijah" – that is, John the Baptiser – had suffered, so the Son of Man would suffer.

The way in which John meets his death provides a contrast between the corrupt and worldly court of Herod, with its disregard for life and the ascendancy of pride and lust, and the values which Jesus says he must exemplify in his own ministry. From now on the suffering servant tries to spell out to his disciples the cost of following him.

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THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST
REMBRANDT